



## Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center Monthly Progress Report December 2013

### Highlights

During December, one new school partnered with the Resource Center; the attached list provides the names of all 417 Partner Schools. Also during December, a new high school joined the Resource Center as a Friend. Outreach staff gave five presentations and held 88 meetings with stakeholders and schools throughout the state. This month, the team also announced Travel Plan Assistance recipients and distributed the new 18-month SRTS poster calendars.

### Outreach Summaries

#### Metro Atlanta Territory - Nichole Hollis, School Outreach Coordinator

Nichole continued to meet with existing partners in December to develop plans for schools for the second semester and Georgia Walk to School Day. She also distributed materials to schools that completed Student Travel Tallies. The Metro Atlanta Territory has 127 Partners.

Nichole presented to a group of parent liaisons in Clayton County about the benefits of SRTS at their monthly cluster meeting. Eight schools attended the meeting, including Adamson Elementary School, McGarrah Elementary School, **East Clayton Elementary School Morrow Middle School Morrow Elementary School**, Morrow High School, **Haynie Elementary School**, and Marshall Elementary School; five of these are already Partners with the Resource Center. Nichole also gave a presentation in conjunction with the Clayton County Board of Health at **Harper Elementary School's** PTA meeting. There were over 300 parents present to learn about safety initiatives for their kids. The Clayton County Board of Health is partnering with two schools this year to provide grant money for schools interested in expanding their SRTS program.

Six Schools in Metro Atlanta applied for Travel Plan Assistance, including **Sagamore Hills Elementary School, Kelly Lake Elementary School, Henderson Mill Elementary School, Springdale Park Elementary School, Mary Lin Elementary School, and Inman Middle School. Springdale Park Elementary School** was awarded the assistance from the Resource Center. The School Champion and principal are forming a group of stakeholders in the community for the upcoming meetings in January and February.

Alicia and Nichole met with **Clean Air Schools** to formulate a plan to approach 25 schools to participate in Clean Commute Week as they plan for Georgia Walk to School Day. Interested schools will have the opportunity to use resources available from both organizations.

In January, Nichole will be making contact with schools to plan for Georgia Walk to School Day and also informing schools about the **5th Grade National Saris Bicycling Poster Contest**.

### **North Georgia Territory - Alicia Hatcher, Senior School Outreach Coordinator**

Alicia met with Erica Holloman, School Champion for **Timothy Road Elementary School** in Athens, on December 5, 2013. Timothy Road has had a strong SRTS program for several years and continues to hold monthly Walk to School Days. Timothy Road held their fourth event of the 2013-2014 school year on December 6<sup>th</sup>, with more than 100 students walking from their homes and two nearby meeting points for Walking School Buses. Alicia provided incentive items from the Resource Center for participants.

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, the Resource Center held its first **SRTS webinar for Regional Commissions** across the state. Alicia handled logistics and facilitated the webinar. To kick off the call, Alicia welcomed everyone and gave updates from the Resource Center including a recap of International Walk to School Day, NHTSA pedestrian education training opportunity, and plans for Georgia Walk to School Day in March.

Julio Portillo of the **River Valley Regional Commission**, and Julie Smith of the **Northwest Georgia Regional Commission**, presented to the group. Both shared their SRTS successes with the group. The webinar session closed with a questions and answers session, which spurred group discussion. Overall, the webinar was a success with representatives from 10 out of 12 regional commissions. The group decided that they would like to have these webinars quarterly, and Alicia emailed contact information of all parties to the group to encourage ongoing communication. SOC's will follow up with their respective regional commission contacts.

### **East Central Territory - Taki Gartrell Smith, School Outreach Coordinator**

Taki maintains 86 Partners in the East Central Territory. Seven schools in the East Central Territory have opted not to continue participating in the SRTS Partner Program due to limited involvement from parents, administrative turnover since originally partnering, or having partnered only because of infrastructure call in 2010. Taki traveled to Henry, Bibb, and Columbia Counties to meet with Partners and to distribute the 2014-2015 SRTS Event Calendars. In Columbia County, Taki met with **Grovetown High School**, a potential Friend of the Resource Center, and a concerned parent regarding providing SRTS support at the school. Taki was able to network with the Columbia County Board of Commissioners Engineering Department and provide the school with resources.

Taki traveled to Bibb County and attended a PTO Holiday Program at **Burghard Elementary School**, a Partner of the Resource Center. She presented the Golden Shoe Award to the School Champion and Principal; the school received the award for showcasing the most school spirit during their International Walk at School (IWALK) Day event in October. The school formed a Walking School Bus throughout the hallways and displayed posters the students created for IWALK. At the PTO meeting, Taki was also able to provide the parents with information about the SRTS program and she also distributed SRTS magnets to the parents.

Taki conducted the Facebook Promotion at **Hampton Elementary School** in Henry County during parent pick-up earlier this month. Taki, along with the Student Council Committee at Hampton Elementary, distributed SRTS Facebook fliers and resources on the topic "No Idling." Some of the resources dispersed included: "No Idling" pledge cards, Clean Air Campaign flyers, and SRTS information on improving air quality. The Facebook Promotion provided parents with information about the Resource Center as well as Clean Air Campaign information. The Resource Center Facebook page "Likes" increased by 16%.



*Taki presents the Golden Shoe Award to Melissa Clanton, Burghard Elementary School Champion on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.*

During December, Taki met with Robert Rychel, a planner for the **Middle Georgia Regional Commission**. Robert provided Taki with information on SRTS-related projects that the Regional Commission had worked on in the past. He also provided Taki with potential schools in the Houston County area that could benefit from the SRTS program. During December Taki also continued to follow-up with active school Partners as well as reach out to inactive school Partners.

### **Southwest Territory - Chelsea Carter, School Outreach Coordinator**

Chelsea supports 63 schools in the Southwest Territory. Chelsea focused her efforts on collecting the Student Travel Tally forms this month. In hopes of establishing an amicable relationship with the schools, she offered to pick up the forms directly from the schools to save the Champions time and postage. During the visits to pick up tallies, Chelsea also promoted Georgia Walk to School Day and spoke directly with new schools and current prospects.

Most of the schools in the **South Georgia and Southwestern Regional Commission** areas have either already submitted their tallies or are currently in the process. Some of the schools in these areas were unaware of their Partnership with the Safe Routes to School, having been initially signed up by a third party, such as a school district administrator. Chelsea has been working on identifying a Champion at each school. The **Lanier County Board of Education** has assisted the schools in collecting data as well as with other Safe Routes initiatives.

Chelsea visited the following counties in the **Three Rivers Regional Commission** area: Crawford, Spalding, Fayette, Coweta, and Carroll. In Carroll County, pending Partner Carrollton Central Elementary School wishes to have their first Walk to School Day in March as a part of Georgia Walk to School Day; they plan to sign on officially with the program soon. Whitesburg Elementary School in Carroll County has also expressed interest in the program after Chelsea visited administrators at the school this month. This school came to her attention after speaking with Kimberly Dutton from the Three Rivers Regional Commission office. Coach Barrett from Whitesburg Elementary School has a group of students named "The Mighty Milers" who run around the playground after school. Coach Barrett says he would love to be a part of anything that would benefit the health of children and increase their physical activity. Chelsea plans to meet with Coach Barrett again in January.

While traveling, Chelsea stopped into two new schools - Cowan Road Middle School and Ellis G. Arnall Middle School – to leave program information; she plans to follow up with these schools in January. Chelsea also observed a school dismissal at **Peeples Elementary School** in Fayette County and provided feedback regarding their difficult dismissal congestion and confusion. She continues to facilitate dismissal observation and walk audits for other schools in the region.

In the **River Valley Regional Commission** area Chelsea traveled to the following counties: Clay, Crisp, Taylor, Chattahoochee, and Muscogee. She also met with her Regional Commission contact, Julio Portillo, to visit the schools that have been difficult to contact. Julio is committed to reaching out to the Superintendent for help getting some schools to finish their Travel Tallies.

Next month, Chelsea plans to follow up with current prospects while promoting Georgia Walk to School Day and helping inexperienced schools plan their events. She plans to collect Travel Tallies from Lanier, Taylor, Cook, Tift, and Wayne counties. And she will schedule NHTSA curriculum training classes to get schools more involved with the program.

## **Coastal Georgia Territory - Patti Sistrunk, Project Manager**

Maintaining an active outreach territory herself, Patti supports relationships with 39 Partners in Coastal Georgia.

Silver Partner **Charles Ellis Montessori Academy**, in Chatham County, was selected to receive Travel Plan Assistance this winter and spring. The school serves over 560 pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students in a historic school campus in the Ardsley Park area of Savannah. The school participates annually in Walk to School Days and Bike to School Day and has daily park and walk locations to ease congestion around the school. Given its potential for more improvements, the school was an excellent candidate for the assistance. In January, Patti will meet with the school's Champion and principal, to begin forming a committee for the planning process.

The **Safe Kids Savannah** annual holiday luncheon and meeting was held early in the month. Patti, who is the coalition's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Chair, attended and took the opportunity to share information about upcoming events and programs related to bicycle and pedestrian safety. Two coalition members are interested in being trained to teach the NHTSA Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum. The Resource Center will coordinate a training session in early 2014 with Safe Kids Savannah Coordinator Alison Huffman.

Members also expressed interest in supporting Georgia Walk to School Day in March. About 10 attendees requested and received a 2014-2015 SRTS poster calendar (shown at right).

Patti presented to **Todd Grant Elementary's** School Council at the request of parents and the **Coastal Regional Commission**. One of the school's Council members is also the Downtown Development Director for the City of Darien. The City is interested in promoting healthy living and to increase the pedestrian and bicycle access in the area. Students often walk for field trips but few walk to the school since the school is near Highway 17 (a major artery through town), the school serves the entire county with most students living outside the walk zone, and most students are under eight years old since the school only serves through third grade. The school is, however, very interested in pedestrian education. Patti will follow up with the school and parents in January.

## **Marketing**

This new poster calendar features January 2014 through June 2015. The calendars were delivered to SOCs and were delivered in person and via mail to Partners and Friends throughout the month.

The website is currently being updated with new graphics. Carol Kachadoorian, Marketing Manager, is working with a contract web developer and designer to incorporate the fresh look. The website updates are expected to go live in early 2014.

Incentives were ordered for Georgia Walk to School Day. Glow-in-the-dark silicone wristbands branded with the Resource Center website will be delivered to Partners registered for gWalk. Additionally, the walk safety bookmarks are in the process of being updated.

## **Thirty-day "Look Ahead" Period**

The Resource Center will continue to deliver calendars to stakeholders. In early January, the Georgia Walk to School Day (gWalk) registration will be posted to the website and advertised to Partners. A newsletter promoting gWalk



registration will go out to contacts in mid-January, and incentives for gWalk will be delivered to SOC's. The walk-to-school bookmarks are being updated and will be printed and distributed for gWalk, too.

The Resource Center submitted a request to coordinate Georgia's statewide Saris Poster Contest for the Saris Bicycle Company. We will learn in early January if we were selected to coordinate. The annual contest provides a poster theme related to bicycles and is open to all fifth graders. Resource Center staff will coordinate territory contests and then a statewide contest on Facebook.

The Resource Center will also provide Travel Plan Assistance to Springdale Park Elementary and Charles Ellis Montessori Academy in January. Patti and Nichole will meet with the schools, coordinate the first of the meetings, and work to develop a local SRTS Committee. Additionally, data will be collected from the schools throughout the month.

The Resource Center team will meet in late January or early February for the quarterly team meeting and training. Date will be determined based on team member availability.